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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 003106

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NSC STAFF FOR SINGH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/24/2016

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: EGYPT: MORE DEMONSTRATIONS PLANNED FOR MAY 25

REF: CAIRO 3006

Classified by ECPO Counselor John Desrocher for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Cairo-based anti-government activists are planning for a third Thursday in a row of demonstrations on May 25. The date is the first anniversary of the referendum amending the Egyptian constitution to permit multi-candidate presidential elections, marred at the time by police attacks on peaceful demonstrators calling for a boycott. An array of different, mainly leftist secular groups are planning to participate, in addition to a silent protest planned by the Judges Club, and possible participation in demonstrations by the Muslim Brotherhood. There may be disruptions, arrests, and police beatings of demonstrators similar to those on May 11 and 18. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) For the third Thursday in a row, anti-regime activists plan to defy a GOE ban and demonstrate in Central Cairo on May 25. The demonstrations coincide with the first anniversary of the referendum on the amendment of Article 76 of the Egyptian Constitution. Demonstrators want to remind the public of the violence employed by plainclothes police who put down demonstrations urging a boycott of the referendum - violence which was documented in dramatic photos by the media and which prompted international condemnation, including a statement by President Bush.

¶3. (SBU) Contacts advise that teaching staff at Cairo University will hold a silent protest at 11:30 a.m. to demand the release of students and faculty detained in recent demonstrations. However, the center of the action on May 25 will be in the area just south of Ramses Street and a few blocks east of the Nile in central Cairo, where contacts advise us that the Ghad Party, the unlicensed Karamah Party, and the student groups Youth for Change and the 9th of March Movement plan to gather at the Bar Syndicate at 1 pm.

¶4. (SBU) The Judges Club, which has vowed to continue to press its demands for a new law that would institute sweeping changes to the management and regulation of the judiciary, has called for a one hour silent protest to begin at 1:30 p.m. in front of Club headquarters, just around the corner from Cairo's Central Court House. At 3:00 p.m. Kefaya ("Enough"), journalists, and communists, are planning to rally on the steps of the press syndicate, just one door up from the Judges Club, the site of the May 25, 2005 attacks on demonstrators. The secular activist group Shayfeenkom ("we are watching") has been running ads in the independent media and sending mass mobile phone text messages to publicize the demonstrations and raise public awareness on some of the core issues.

¶5. (SBU) Kefaya has also called on Egyptians to turn off all

their lights at 9 p.m. and drape black banners, as a sign of mourning for the May 25, 2005 attacks and continued suppression by the Government.

¶6. (C) Comment: We are doubtful that many Cairenes will heed Kefaya's call for a symbolic blackout, but May 25 could well see a repeat of the police blockades, violence, and disruptions that Cairo has witnessed for the past two Thursdays. There are unconfirmed reports that the Muslim Brotherhood will participate in some of these demonstrations. The extent of the MB's involvement will likely determine the magnitude of the demonstrations and the ferocity of the GOE's response. End comment.

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